



National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Cross Generational Activities

Briefing to the Strategic Management Council
16 December 2008



Introduction

At the April 2008 Strategic Management Council (SMC) meeting, eight members of the next generation community attended to discuss the **long-term strategic effects** on the NASA mission **of current hiring practices** and **the upcoming gap in US human space flight**, and specific actions that the SMC and next generation community could each take

This presentation is intended to:

- **Provide a status** on the next generation issue
- **Report on the results** of the cross-generational discussions requested by the Administrator in April



Issue Areas

Subsequent discussions and subsequent work has revolved around the 4 issues from the April SMC:

- 1 Provide the NASA workforce with an infusion of fresh ideas, methodologies and technologies**
- 2 Provide the NASA workforce the programs and experience it needs to be the leaders in the future**
- 3 Enable enhanced communication and collaboration between NASA centers**
- 4 Attract, hire and retain young people**



8-Month Scorecard

There has been a great deal of progress since April

	Progress	Additional help needed
1 Idea Infusion	Centers have begun implementing ideas	Varying levels of participation
2 Development opportunities	Many new training opportunities, esp. for leadership & system engineering	More historical hands-on "training" with smaller projects
3 Communication	Tremendous grass-roots community building	No formal top down support for cross-center discussions
4 Hiring!	More flexibility to hire students	NASA's average age continues to climb



Activities



Provide the NASA workforce with an infusion of fresh ideas, methodologies and technologies

Agency & Center Next Generation and/or Cross-Generation Project Teams, focus groups, and/or inclusion and innovation councils to work issues

- Dryden New Professionals Group
- GRC Developing Professionals Club
- HQ NextGen Lunch
- JSC Inclusion & Innovation (I&I) Council
- KSC Refresh team
- LaRC focus groups/Center Director round tables
- MSFC focus groups/Center Director round tables
- OpenAmes
- OpenGoddard
- SSC focus groups/Center Director round tables



Activities

2

Provide the NASA workforce the programs and experience it needs to be the leaders in the future

Progress has been made with training and development programs focused on professional, personal effectiveness, and leadership capabilities

- NASA FIRST Program
- Supervisory Training
- Communications Training
- Mid-level Management Training
- Business Education Training
- Systems Engineering Leadership Development Program
- Program/Project Management Training
- C-GPS



Activities

3

Enable enhanced communication and collaboration between NASA centers

Multiple communication venues – formal and informal – provided to improve vertical and horizontal communication and to provide more access to center leadership

- Initiated Agency & Center Next Generation and/or Cross-Generation Project Teams for the purposes of making recommendations for improving programs and activities at NASA
- Networking websites have been created at the Agency and center levels
- Establishing Agency-wide young professionals network
- Centers are providing cyber café, library, and/or cafeteria meeting areas
- There are center director round table discussions/brown bag lunches
- Culture Survey – developing a “Go To Organizational Model” to strengthen/improve communication within NASA (multi-generational)



Activities

4

Attract, hire and retain young people

New efforts to show interest in Next Gen workforce

- Informed OMB that Co-ops would not count against center ceilings. Back up plan is in place should we once again have to count them. KSC has set the precedent with their Kennedy Intern Program – educational opportunity not personal services
- Several JSC college students created entertaining videos to help their generation connect with NASA in a way not expected from a government agency. KSC also preparing a recruitment video to target next-gen workforce
- Improved New Employee Orientation programs
- Matched Next Geners with mentors
- OBIN – working to have new employees fully functioning as close to day one as possible and through first year of employment
- Developing a Career Management Program (cGPS) – career patterns of progression



Activities

4

Attract, hire and retain young people

The average age of NASA

- In the 8 months since the April SMC, the average age of NASA has continued to increase

The average age of new hires

- In the 8 months since the April SMC, the average age of hiring shows mixed results.
- Hiring decisions have a direct but slow effect on NASA's average age, so the average age of hires by center continues to be tracked.



Results of Center Discussions

Cross-Generation Project Teams, focus groups, and/or inclusion and innovation councils at seven centers held discussions

Report is a description of those results and recommendations**

The team analyzed the data to look for trends and realistic suggestions that could be implemented at the Agency level, rather than addressing all the ideas that can be implemented at the organization or Center level

** A complete list of ideas is captured in Appendix A.



Recommendations

Key Theme #1 **Formal Development Program**

The workforce is largely unfamiliar with the new programs such as FIRST (especially true in technical organizations)

Recommendation that a new strategy for advertising NASA formal development at lower levels at centers to promote leadership training and identify high-potential candidates



Recommendations

Key Theme #2 **Mentoring**

Several Centers have very high quality formal mentoring programs in place and have a rich culture of informal mentoring

This is not uniform across the Agency and many of the smaller Centers do not have the same resources to make this happen

Recommendation that the Agency Office of Human Capital investigates the possibility of having an Agency wide contract with a vendor that could set up and administer formal mentoring programs at each of the Centers



Recommendations

Key Theme #3 **NASA Rotation Program**

Recommendation that a new employee rotation program be implemented within the agency

Newer employees can apply for details lasting three months at other NASA centers to work there and gain knowledge within that center's areas of expertise

All newly hired employees and converted coop students would be eligible, and can potentially work one or more details over a two to three year period at other NASA centers



Recommendations

Key Theme #4 **Communication Technology**

Would benefit from technologies in communication such as wiki's, Instant Messenger, blogs, and other social networking tools

Better inform employees of the availability of current technology

Recommendation that the usage of these new communication tools be further investigated and more thoroughly advertised to the workforce by establishing a tiger team focused solely on this issue



Recommendations

Key Theme #5 **Business Resource Management**

Recommendation to institute a business resource management model similar to the 70/20/10 model successfully implemented by Google

A modified version of the model suggested for use at NASA, with the intent of cultivating innovation, would empower employees to utilize their time in the following 80/20 ratio:

- 80% of time should be dedicated to core business tasks

- 20% of time should be dedicated to projects related to the core business



Recommendations

Key Theme #5 **Business Resource Management**

The nature of the work undertaken in the 20% time could vary significantly between individuals based upon their skills and interests

Such a program would have far-reaching positive effects, including:

- (1) encouraging innovation by allowing individuals to pursue new ideas,
- (2) creating new pathways for communication by allowing individuals to cross project lines, and
- (3) effectively spreading "lessons learned" across individual Centers and across NASA



Recommendations

Key Theme #6 **Launch Tickets**

Recommend tickets to be set aside for employees at each center, at all levels, for viewing of launches to experience the fulfillment of NASA's mission



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